

PEOPLE & THINGS

DR. ALBERT SCHWEITZER, the hero of that memorable article in *THE SUNDAY TIMES* by my colleague John Russell last year, is unfeignedly indifferent to conventional honours. "What did he say," I once asked one of his fellow workers at Lambarene, "when you told him that he had won the Nobel Prize?"

"He didn't say anything. He just went on cleaning out his antelopes. And then when the letters and telegrams came in by the sackful he said: 'Well, if this is fame, I'd just as soon it was post-humous.'" But I think that he will have been touched by his appointment to honorary membership of the Order of Merit; for he has never forgotten that England was one of the first countries to support his mission in Africa. English opinion means much to him; like many Frenchmen, he has adopted *le fairplay* as a favourite word in his vocabulary. And I suspect that "Robinson Crusoe," which he has admired since his childhood, may have played some part in his original decision to spend his life in the service of a backward people.

Regimental Honours

GREAT sums of money have a fascination all their own; and when I read that Colonel R. J. L. Ogilby, D.S.O., Colonel of the London Scottish, had given £100,000 to endow the Army Museums Ogilby Trust, I prevailed upon him to let me pay him a call.

Colonel Ogilby is a brisk, non-nonsense person, and I could not get him to admit that there was anything out of the way in the size and nature of his gift. "Existing regimental and army museums" are the prime beneficiaries of the trust; and Colonel Ogilby, a lifelong enthusiast for such museums, was more interested in the response to his action than in that action itself.

"It's amazing how people come forward," he said. "And the interesting thing is that it's not only the officers who do it. You often find that some of the best things were collected by other ranks."

The recent past was, I gathered, one of the most difficult periods to display adequately. "Take the South African War," said Colonel

By ATTICUS

Ogilby. "It's rarely you see a complete uniform of that period. People wore them out and threw them away, and now you can't get them."

A Dashing Example

UNIFORMS are, of course, only one part of a regimental museum; but they are a most arresting part, and I learnt from Colonel Ogilby that the eighteenth and early-nineteenth century uniform is also a considerable rarity. "Our present dress regulations date



A museum piece.

from 1822, you know," he said. "Before that there was a board of general officers, and they saw to it all. They had a dress-place—an office, you know—in Tooley Street, but then it was burnt down and all the records were destroyed. So you tell your readers to come forward if they find anything."

Just as a pointer, I reproduce here a spectacular example, dated 1805, and carried through in pale blue cloth, with white facings, tall feathers, and a blaze of gold at wrists and neck. The officer in

question is a member of the 10th or Prince of Wales's Dragoons, and he comes from the extensive collection of Messrs. W. T. Spencer.

Word-making

MONSIEUR PAUL CLAUDEL, who died last Thursday, was revered as a poet, respected as an ambassador, and dreaded as a controversialist. He was, even in early youth, the most peremptory of men; and in old age his relations with his adversaries were those of hammer with anvil.

When he was well over eighty he contributed a poem to a famous London literary weekly. The manuscript was lengthy, rough-hewn, obscure. "One word in particular, an adjective of Latin appearance, defied even our foremost lexicologists. That fine judge of language, Monsieur René Massigli, was called in; but likewise retired baffled.

Eventually, the Editor ventured to ask the Master himself. "The word," he explained, "was known to no one in this country. Could Monsieur Claudel confirm that the reading was correct?"

The following postcard came back by return.

"That the word did not exist is possible. But it exists now, because I have used it.

P. Claudel.

Black Magic

AT half-a-guinea an ounce, truffles are beyond the reach of most of us, and it is only on visits to Périgueux and Les Eyzies that we can partake at all freely of what Brillat-Savarin called "the black diamonds of haute cuisine." But if what I hear from South-West Africa is true, *truffes aux cendres* may one day be no rarer than anchovy toast. Truffles abound, it would seem, in this fortunate area. Specimens "the size of an orange, and highly aromatic" have been dug from the dry bed of a river near Rietfontein.

Brillat-Savarin's diamond metaphor is taken up in a despatch from Kimberley; and only in the mention of Postmasburg (hitherto known mainly as a source of asbestos) could there be said to be an ominous undertone.

The open season of these delectable and secretive growths has not yet been exploited. In case you're interested, it's from March to June.

Believe it or Not

THE staff of the National Physical Laboratory at Teddington never admits defeat.

One of their more bizarre problems was to find a cure for the late Sir Alfred Yarrow's insomnia. He found that he could sleep only in a moving car, so the N.P.L. designed an automotive bed which simulated the vibration of an engine, road bumps, and the slight tilt of the car in rounding corners.

When this contraption was tested Sir Alfred was able to get some rest, but he complained that it did not give him the feeling of speeding up and slowing down.

The experts added some further refinements and Sir Alfred was able to sleep comfortably for the rest of his life.